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ABSTRACT

This guide provides information for persons preparing to take government and other employment opportunity entrance examinations. It was developed for use with the Federal Bureau of Investigation and other government agencies employing West Virginians and will be used by Adult Basic Education instructors to better prepare adults for employment. The guide contains examples of the type of questions asked on employment examinations and practical examples of how to complete such examinations effectively. It also contains information on general test-taking techniques, additional study information on specific employment examinations, and tips for job interviewing. Specific topics covered are as follows: following directions and using answer sheets, vocabulary, reading, mathematics, test-taking tips, applying for government jobs, the job interview, and job keeping skills. Eight resources that might help in preparing for government tests are listed. (KC)

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A QUICK GUIDE

To Taking Employment Tests and Applying for Government and Other Jobs

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A QUICK GUIDE
TO TAKING EMPLOYMENT TESTS
AND APPLYING FOR GOVERNMENT
AND OTHER JOBS

HENRY R. MAROCKIE
STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

MARCH 1992

FOREWORD

A QUICK GUIDE TO TAKING EMPLOYMENT TESTS AND APPLYING FOR GOVERNMENT AND OTHER JOBS

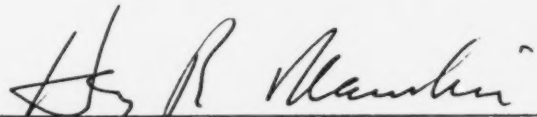
This publication is intended to provide a guide for individuals preparing to take governmental and other employment opportunity entrance examinations. It was developed for use with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and other governmental agencies employing West Virginians.

The publication contains examples of the style of questions asked on employment examinations and practical examples of how to most effectively complete such examinations. It also contains information on general test taking techniques, additional study information on specific employment examinations, and tips for job interviewing.

A Quick Guide To Taking Employment Tests And Applying For Government And Other Jobs will be utilized by Adult Basic Education instructors in West Virginia to better prepare adults for employment. It will be utilized in conjunction with assessment programs to improve the basic skills of individuals taking such examinations to assure the highest possible score and greatest employment opportunity for West Virginians.

This manual was developed by the Office of Adult Education, Division of Technical and Adult Education Services, utilizing Adult Basic Education 353 demonstration funds. Robin Asbury, Adult Education Coordinator for Monongalia County Schools was instrumental in the development of this manual and the educational program it supports.

For additional information, contact the Office of Adult Education and Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), West Virginia Department of Education at 558-0280.



Henry R. Marockie
State Superintendent of Schools

A QUICK GUIDE TO TAKING EMPLOYMENT TESTS
AND APPLYING FOR GOVERNMENT AND OTHER JOBS

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TEST TAKING PREPARATION

Preparing for standardized tests can be time-consuming and frustrating unless you plan carefully. The following suggestions may help:

1. Give yourself enough time to prepare for the test when you apply. In other words, don't apply for a test today to be given tomorrow if you need to study!
2. Budget your time, setting aside as much as you can for test preparation, but don't neglect the other things in your life.
3. Make a realistic study schedule.
4. Study at the same time every day.
5. Choose a study area that is comfortable, quiet, and well-lighted. Have everything on hand that you need, such as pens, pencils, paper, reference materials, etc.

Now that you've set up your preparation time, what's next?

Using Study Guides

First, find out as much as you can about the test. One source might be friends that have taken it. Don't just rely on what they tell you. Also study whatever descriptive material that you can find about the test. Get a copy of a study guide. To understand what study guides are so that you can use them effectively, consider the following:

- a. What are study guides?

They are books designed to help you get ready for specific tests. Each study guide contains general information about a given standardized test. It will also have practice tests with questions similar to those you will have to answer. Most guides include answer keys for the practice tests. Some also contain word lists and suggestions on how to improve your score.

- b. How should I use a study guide?

For the most effective use of a study guide, study the general information given about the test, such as the length, kinds of questions, application procedures, etc. Next, take the practice tests. Study why certain answers are right or wrong.

Analyze why you were not correct. Determine your strengths and weaknesses and work to improve your shortcomings.

- c. What should I avoid in using a study guide?

Don't memorize anything such as questions or answers. Instead, make generalizations about the kind of thinking required.

Don't try to cram. Take enough time to go over each section carefully and thoroughly.

Don't concentrate on answers instead of questions. Study them together to get an idea both of the kinds of questions which might be asked and the answers that are acceptable.

Don't assume that if you know everything in the study guide you'll know everything on the test!

- d. Which study guides are best? Which should I buy?

No study guide is perfect. Before you buy any, examine them using the following questions:

- * Is it thorough?
- * Does it have general explanatory material or only practice tests?
- * Does it have practice tests on the areas in which you are weakest?
- * Does it have any sections on test-taking strategies?
- * Is it really necessary to buy it? Can you borrow one?

Even if you decide not to use a study guide, make sure you can answer these questions:

- a. What do I need to know about the test itself?

- * What subjects or areas are on the test?
- * How many parts does it have?
- * What do I have to do in each part?
- * Are all the parts equally important or do some count more than others?
- * What kind of questions are on the test?
- * What do I have to do to answer the questions? Do I need to know facts only, make inferences, draw conclusions, solve problems, interpret tables or graphs, choose synonyms or antonyms, find errors, complete analogies?

b. How do I decide what to study?

First, jot down some notes about the key areas on the test, the importance of each, and the kinds of questions. Then list what you do and don't understand. Now think about yourself. What parts of the test worry you the most? What worries you the least? What do you need to study the longest and hardest?

Now look at the areas in which you feel the weakest -those that you're the most worried about and that you think you'll have to spend the most time studying. What are your problems in these areas?

- * Do you need to review material you've learned but forgotten?
- * Do you need to learn new or unfamiliar material?
- * Are some test-taking skills, such as making inferences, unfamiliar to you?
- * Are timed tests a problem?
- * Is vocabulary a problem?
- * If you have many incorrect answers on the practice tests, do you have difficulty in seeing why they were wrong?

After you've answered these questions, you can approach the most critical question:

c. How can I overcome my difficulties?

First, divide your problem area into parts. For example, if vocabulary is a problem, assign yourself a specific number of words to study each day. Now, decide what you need to LEARN and what you need to REVIEW. Spend time on what you need to learn. Find patterns in the things on which you need the most work. Make generalizations.

If you have to read a lot in your studying, practice two important skills: skimming for the main idea and note-taking. Concentrate on concepts and main ideas. Go through all reading material twice: once for concepts and main ideas, and once for clarification and details. Use your notes to decide what to review. Use the context to figure out unfamiliar words.

Approach your preparations with a specific goal in mind. Assign yourself a definite amount of information for each study session and get through it.

Spending time setting up test preparation program should provide you with a thorough, practical, and productive system

for getting ready to take a standardized test. You should get a sound knowledge of subject matter, know what is expected of you, and be physically and psychologically ready for the test.

Some Final Reminders...

- * Once you've decided on a study time, STICK WITH IT. Don't procrastinate, start late, or try to cram.
- * Remember that it's important to study consistently and regularly.
- * Don't neglect sleeping, eating or other responsibilities. Keep things in balance.
- * Concentrate on main ideas and concepts. Don't try to remember unnecessary details.
- * Keep your goal in mind.

FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS AND USING ANSWER KEYS

Following Directions

On some tests, the supervisor might instruct you on what to do for each part of the test. On other tests, general directions may be given, but it will be your responsibility to read the specific instructions for each part. Sometimes it is up to you to read and understand all directions and follow them exactly. If you misunderstand what you are expected to do, you may answer incorrectly and have a lower score.

Usually you will be given time to read the directions and ask questions if you don't understand. Even if such time is not specifically set aside, it's a good idea to read all directions carefully. Don't guess at what you are supposed to do. Read and then ask the test supervisor if you aren't sure.

Some suggestions for following directions:

- a. Read all the directions before you decide you don't understand them. Usually something that seems confusing will be made clear later.
- b. Make sure you know exactly what to do. Are you supposed to answer every question the same way, or do different questions require you to do different things?
- c. Study any examples given and make sure you understand why the answers given in the examples are correct. Doing this will show you the kind of thinking you'll need to answer the other questions.
- d. Pay attention to underlined or *italicized* words. They signal something important.
- e. If the directions are confusing to you in any way, ASK the test supervisor.

Filling in Answer Sheets

On most standardized tests, you will be required to write your answers on a separate answer sheet. It is essential that you fill in the answer sheet correctly and completely.

You will be asked for two kinds of information on the answer sheet: personal information and the answers to the test questions.

The Personal Information Section

Provide all information you are asked for. This might include:

- a. name: last, first, middle initial
- b. address: street name and number, city and state, zip code
- c. date: month, day, year

You might also be asked for:

- a. test form: this will be printed on your test booklet.
- b. birthdate: month, day, year
- c. country and/or native language
- d. whether you've taken the test before and if so, when
- e. address of test site

For most of the items above, you will be asked to fill in the information by hand. This usually means printing letters or numbers in little boxes:

Print your name(last, first, middle initial, in the spaces below:

D	I	S	N	E	Y		W	A	L	T	E	R		E					
---	---	---	---	---	---	--	---	---	---	---	---	---	--	---	--	--	--	--	--

Print today's date (month, day, year in the spaces below:

0	5	0	8	9	1
---	---	---	---	---	---

Keep the following in mind when filling in boxes:

- a. Put only one letter or number in each box.
- b. PRINT, don't write. You may use both small and capital letters, or all capitals.
- c. Print clearly and legibly.
- d. Leave spaces where necessary, such as between your last and first names.
- e. Use abbreviations wherever possible, especially in addresses:
 - * ST, AVE, BLVD, RD for street, avenue, boulevard, road
 - * WV, OH, KY, PA and other two-letter abbreviations for West Virginia, Ohio, Kentucky, Pennsylvania and other states
 - * 1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc. for first, second, third and other ordinal numbers
 - * other common abbreviations

- f. If you don't have enough boxes to fill in your complete last name, first name, and middle initial, don't put two letters in each box to make it fit. Print your last name completely, but use initials for your first and middle name. If you still don't have enough room, print only your last name or as much of it as possible.

Sometimes you will be asked to enter information in two ways: by printing letters or numbers in boxes and then blackening a corresponding circle or space between two lines:

Today's Date

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

When you are asked to do this:

- Be sure the letters or numbers you print and the letters or numbers you blacken are the same.
- Be sure you PRINT.
- Be sure your letters and numbers are clear and neat.
- Be sure the black marks you make are heavy and dark.

The Answers for the Test

When you mark answers, you'll only have to blacken circles or spaces between lines. This isn't hard, but it is very easy to make mistakes. Every answer you mark incorrectly lowers your score. Some important things to consider:

- Make sure the marks you make are heavy and dark and that they fill the entire space:

Good

■ || || ||
1 2 3 4

(A) (B) (C) (D)

Unacceptable

* || || ||
1 2 3 4

(A) (B) (C) (D)

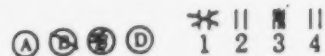
- b. Unless the directions tell you differently, do not mark answers with circles, x's, dots, etc.:

Unacceptable



- c. If you mark an answer and then change your mind, erase your first answer completely. Double-marked answers are counted wrong.

Unacceptable



- d. If you decide to leave an answer blank and come back to it later, don't mark that space with the answer to the next question.
- e. If you skip an answer and want to come back to it later, be careful not to skip more than one answer space on your answer sheet.
- f. Do not leave extra marks on your paper.
- g. Don't write notes or personal messages on your answer sheet.
- h. Make sure the number on your answer sheet and the number on your test booklet agree. If they don't, many of your answers will be marked wrong.
- i. If special pencils are needed, they will be given to you by the proctor. Use these pencils, not your own.

Marking an answer sheet may seem like a simple task, but it is very important that you mark it completely and correctly because your answers will be checked mechanically. This means that either a machine will decide if your answers are correct, or a person using an answer key will. In either case, only answers that are easy to recognize are important. It isn't enough for your answers to be correct. They have to be entered correctly.

If your answers are machine scored, you have to pay particular attention to how you mark answers. Any answers you have double-marked, marked incorrectly, or marked too lightly will not be seen by the machine or will confuse it. Extra marks will also do this. If the machine can't see your answer or is confused, it will decide your answer is wrong.

VOCABULARY

The vocabulary section of a standardized test requires you to do at least one of the following:

- a. select synonyms for given words or phrases
- b. select antonyms for given words or phrases
- c. select words or phrases to complete analogies
- d. select which of a group of words is unrelated

Synonyms

Two words or phrases having the same meaning or synonyms. A good example of a synonym is a dictionary definition. You may be asked to select synonyms in one of two ways:

1. Given a word or phrase, you are to choose another word or phrase with the same meaning:

Example: ponder

- a. a small pond
- b. to increase
- c. to consider
- d. a type of bomb

2. Given a passage to establish context, you must choose words or phrases to explain the meanings of words within the passage.

Antonyms

Antonyms are two words or phrases having opposite meaning. Antonym questions are of two types:

1. Given a word or phrase, you must choose another word or phrase which means most nearly the opposite.

Example:

mediocre	a.	ordinary
	b.	average
	c.	inferior
	d.	outstanding

2. Given a passage to establish context, you must select an antonym for a word or phrase included in the passage.

Analogies

Analogies test a broad range of subject areas, including science, literature, mathematics, history, art, and music. They are sets of four words in which the relationships between the words are as important as the meanings of the words. They are always stated in this form:

A:B::Y:Z

This means that "A is to B as Y is to Z." In other words, the relationship between words A and B is the same as the relationship between words Y and Z.

To complete analogies appropriately, consider this: Is the important relationship between the first two parts and the last two parts?

A:B::Y:Z

Or, is the relationship between the first and third parts and the second and fourth parts?

A:B::Y:Z

In analogy questions, part of the analogy will be given. You must choose the most appropriate word or words to make the analogy complete. Analogy questions come in two types:

1. Analogies with one part missing

Example: wrist:_____::hand:foot
a. finger
b. toe
c. waist
d. ankle

2. Analogies with two parts missing

Example: hen:rooster::_____
a. chicken:bird
b. horse:stallion
c. cow:bull
d. fowl:poultry

Picking the Unrelated Word

Sometimes you'll see vocabulary questions in which your job will be to choose one word in a group that is unrelated to the others. Usually you will have four words in this kind of question. In order to choose the unrelated word, you'll have to understand the meanings of all the words in the group. Then you'll be able to see the relationship among the words, to see which three words are alike, and to choose the one word that doesn't fit.

Example: increase augment curtail expand
 A B C D

Strategies for Answering Vocabulary Questions

1. Don't put off studying vocabulary. Include vocabulary work as part of your study time from the start.
2. Learn how and when words are used as well as their definition.
3. Know all members of a word family (noun, verb, adjective, adverb forms) and know all three parts of the verb (simple, past, past participle).
4. Become aware of different levels of usage, such as slang, formal, and informal.
5. Organize words you learn into groups of related meanings.

Synonyms and Antonyms

1. Make sure the words are the same part of speech.
2. Make sure the verbs are in the same tense or form and that nouns agree in number.
3. Don't forget that synonyms are words with the SAME meaning. You might find antonyms (opposites) listed among the possible answer choices for synonyms.
4. Don't forget that antonyms are words with OPPOSITE meanings. You might find synonyms included among the possible answer choices for antonyms.
5. Read each item carefully. Often words that are incorrect, but similar in spelling to correct choices, are included among answer choices.

Identifying the Unrelated Word

1. First concentrate on finding the words that are alike. Then use the process of elimination to find the one that is different.
2. Compare each word with the others. Look for the common meaning. See if the words are generally positive or negative. If most of the words are generally positive, the unrelated word will be negative, and vice versa.

Analogies

1. Determine what the relationship is and decide which pairs of words are related (first-third and second-fourth, or first-second and third-fourth).
2. Look at possible answers and choose the most appropriate.
3. Check to make sure your choice has exactly the same relationship as in the part of the analogy given to you.

READING COMPREHENSION

Most standardized tests include reading sections. Usually you are tested on your reading comprehension skills. Sometimes reading recall, or the ability to remember what you have read, is tested. You will have to read several passages of varying lengths and answer questions about them. The following reading comprehension skills are commonly tested:

- a. finding the main idea
- b. making inferences and drawing conclusions
- c. finding the author's purpose or point of view
- d. using the context
- e. summarizing or restating
- f. identifying what the author did NOT state or imply
- g. anticipating what might follow
- h. inferring what might have preceded
- i. choosing an appropriate title
- j. identifying the type of information in a passage or deciding where the information might be found
- k. making generalizations
- l. determining what pronouns and other words refer to
- m. answering questions which involve grouping information
- n. answering factual questions

Strategies for Reading Comprehension

- 1. Quickly scan the entire passage for general meaning. Don't try to understand every word.
- 2. Look at the questions and answers. Determine what kind of information you need to answer them. Do you need a name? Date? Amount? Reason?
- 3. Go back to the reading passage and look for the kind of information the question requires.
- 4. Whenever line numbers are given, go back and read that part of the passage.
- 5. Answer questions involving analysis (inference, conclusions, summarizing, etc.) AFTER you have answered the factual questions.
- 6. If you're not sure what a question requires you to do, look at the answer choices. Determine how they are alike and how they are different. Look at the kind of information they contain. Then re-read the question.

MATH

Often on standardized tests, you will be required to answer a variety of math questions. It is important for you to have a good working knowledge of the basics in math, including addition, subtractions, multiplication, division, fractions, decimals, and percents. If the math section is timed, it is essential that you know the basics well enough to work quickly and efficiently.

If the math questions are word problems, you need to be able to interpret exactly what the question is asking you to do before you will be able to decide what math skill to use. The following are some word cues to help you know what to do in certain word problems:

Addition

The following words usually mean that you will need to add:

- * How much or how many -- "How much oil was produced?"
"How many people went to the concert?"
- * Total or sum -- "What is the total number of hamburgers sold?"
- * More -- "If he ran five miles more this week, how many did he run altogether?"
- * Added to -- "Three pounds were added to the amount with which he started."
- * Increased -- "The tax rate was increased \$100.00."
- * Altogether -- "How many are there altogether?"

Subtraction

The following words usually indicate that subtraction should be used:

- * Less -- "How much less was earned?"
- * Fewer -- "How many fewer babies were born?"
- * Difference -- "What is the difference in height?"
- * Left or Remains -- "What is left?" "How much water remains?"
- * Decreased -- "By how much was the amount decreased?"

- * How many more -- You will be given two numbers and asked how much bigger one number is than the other. Subtract the smaller number from the bigger number. "If he weighed 160 pounds today and 143 pounds last month, how many more pounds did he weigh today?"

Multiplication

Here are some clue words for multiplication word problems:

- * How much (or How many) for a larger quantity -- "If gas costs \$1.21 for one gallon, how much will 12 gallons cost?"
- * Times -- "Twenty times as many people drive."
- * At -- "What is the cost of 37 bushels of potatoes at \$.30 a bushel?"

Division

Division word problems can be identified by these words:

- * Divide -- "The lunches were divided equally among the students."
- * Each -- "How much does each one cost?"

Solving Word Problems

Solving word problems can be a frustrating experience. The following suggestions may help you to answer this type of math question with less stress:

1. Make sure you read the problem carefully, paying attention to every word.
2. Determine what you want to know. This is often found in the last sentence of the problem.
3. Decide what numbers in the problem you'll need to figure out what you want to know.
4. Now choose the math operation you need: addition, subtraction, multiplication, or division. Use the clue words in the problem.
5. Work the problem.
6. Check your math and then ask yourself if your answer makes sense. Is it logical?

TAKING THE TEST

Just Before the Test...

How you spend the 24 hours before you take the test can have a lot of bearing on how you will do on the test. Keep the following in mind:

1. Get a good night's sleep so you'll be alert during the test.
2. Double check to make sure you have everything you need on the day of the test: identification, money for coffee or lunch, your test admission ticket, etc. Don't forget to wear a watch.
3. Go over the instructions you received about the test. Don't take anything with you to the test that is not allowed.
4. Eat a good breakfast, preferably with high energy food and light enough to keep you from getting drowsy.
5. Give yourself enough time to get to the testing site early. You don't want to be in a panic by running late.
6. Make sure you know exactly where and when the test is to be given. Find the building, room, and parking ahead of time.
7. Go over your study notes, but only if you have enough time. If you don't have time for a final review, don't cram. Concentrate on relaxing.
8. Take time to relax before the test begins. Try deep breathing, clenching and releasing your fists, or whatever technique works for you.

Things NOT to Do:

1. Don't pull an "all-nighter" by staying up the night before the test. You'll just be less alert and slower during the test.
2. Don't take drugs or medication to calm yourself down, to pep yourself up, or to stay awake. Doing so will interfere with your judgement as well as your health.
3. Don't spend the last few hours before the test cramming and trying to learn what you didn't learn before. You'll only become confused, nervous, and frustrated.

At the Testing Site

It's important to arrive at the testing site early. When you have time to spare, you'll have a chance to relax and become comfortable before the test begins. You'll also have time to choose a good seat. This may seem unimportant, but it can have an effect on your performance. Here are some suggestions:

- a. If part of the test involves listening to recorded instructions or questions, find a seat from which you can hear clearly.
- b. Select a seat close to where the supervisor will be. Since the supervisor will probably be reading directions to you, you want to be able to hear.
- c. If you forgot your watch, sit where you can easily see the wall clock. You'll be checking the time during the test so you can use it wisely.
- d. Find a seat that is physically comfortable. Don't sit too close to an air conditioner, heating vent, or fan. Don't sit where the light is too strong. If you are left-handed, choose a seat with a left-handed desk. If you are right-handed, choose a seat with a right-handed desk.
- e. Don't sit too close to anyone.
- f. Sit where the test proctor can easily see you. If you want to ask a question, you don't want to waste time trying to get his or her attention.
- g. Find out if smoking is permitted during the test. If it is, check to see if there are smoking and non-smoking sections and sit in the appropriate one.
- h. Use the restroom before you go into the testing room!!

Behavior During the Test

One of the main duties of the test supervisor is to watch for cheating. Cheating, or any behavior that looks like cheating, certainly is not permitted. If the proctor catches you cheating or even suspects that you are, you won't be permitted to finish the test. You may not be able to take the test again, and certainly can be disqualified for any job consideration. To eliminate any possibility of cheating, think about the following:

- a. Don't take notes, study guides, or dictionaries into the room unless the information you received about the test specifically states that you can.
- b. If you need to ask a question during the test, ask ONLY the supervisor. Don't ask anyone else.
- c. Don't write down questions or answers to study later. This is cheating.
- d. Don't waste time trying to memorize questions or answers to tell your friends. This is time you could spend on the rest of the test.
- e. If you finish one part of a test early, don't go on to another part or try to sneak a look at it. Go back and review your answers or spend the time on especially difficult questions.
- f. Keep your eyes on your paper. Don't look around the room and especially don't look in the direction of anyone else's paper.

General Strategies for Choosing Answers

During a timed test, you'll probably get frustrated trying to find the right answers unless you approach this logically.

1. Take time to read the directions completely and follow them exactly.
2. Determine the maximum amount of time you should spend in reading and answering any single question. This can be done by using this simple formula:

$$\text{number of questions} \sqrt{\frac{\text{maximum time per question}}{\text{amount of time}}}$$

3. Don't rush through the test, but try to spend less than the maximum amount of time on each question so you'll have extra time to go over difficult questions or to check your answers.
4. Look at all the choices given for each question before you choose the best answer.
5. Work through all the questions as fast as you can, answering those that you can. If you aren't sure about one, make a small mark beside it and go on to the next question. Don't go back to those questions you skipped until you have gone through all the other questions.
6. When you're ready to go back to the questions you skipped, look at the amount of time you have left. Divide that time by the number of questions that you have left to answer to find out the maximum amount of time you have to answer each question.
7. If you are penalized for guessing and you don't know which answer to choose, leave it blank.
8. If you aren't penalized for guessing, try the following:
 - * Look carefully at all the possible answers. Sometimes one word can make the difference between a correct and an incorrect choice. Test writers often anticipate the kind of mistakes you might make in choosing an answer and include common errors among the possible answers.
 - * Eliminate any choices that are obviously wrong and concentrate on those remaining.
 - * Narrow down those choices by using context clues, such as time words, descriptive words, punctuation, subject-verb agreement, etc. Then make an educated guess to choose the most logical answer.
 - * If you can't eliminate any choices, choose a single letter and use it for all the answers on which you guess throughout the test.

Some Final Reminders...

1. Read the directions carefully.
2. Budget your time.
3. Look at all the answer choices and choose the BEST one.
4. Mark your answer sheet clearly.
5. Use all the skills and strategies you've learned, stay calm, and do the best you can.

APPLYING FOR GOVERNMENT JOBS

The largest employer in the United States is the federal government. Federal agencies vary in size; some hire thousands of employees, while others hire only a few.

Pay for federal jobs is determined by the General Schedule (GS). This plan rates jobs by number according to their difficulty and responsibility. Most office jobs fall between GS-1 and GS-10.

Information on federal jobs can be found through the Federal Job Information Center. If an agency has job openings for the type of job in which you are interested, you will be sent a job announcement and a personal qualifications statement (application form).

After completing the personal qualifications statement and submitting it to the appropriate address, you will then be sent information about the test or tests you must take. You will be told where and when to go for the test. The tests vary according to the job for which you are applying, but your math and verbal skills will be tested.

After taking the test or tests, you will then receive a notice of your rating and may be interviewed if you are considered eligible according to your test scores. Applicants with the highest three scores in the ranking are invited for interviews as openings occur. If you are interviewed but rejected, your name will be placed back on the list.

Once you pass the battery of entrance tests and successfully complete the formal interview, you may then be subject to a thorough background check. This usually takes from one to six months and includes contacts with neighbors, former and current employers, references, social acquaintances, and reviews of school, credit, arrest, medical, and military records. You may also be required to submit to a urinalysis for drugs.

THE JOB INTERVIEW

"You have only one chance to make a first impression."

Getting a job depends on doing well during the interview, that all important first impression you make on the employer.

What is an interview? Basically, it is two people talking. One asks questions; the other answers. The employer generally asks the questions and you will be doing the answering.

It is up to you to impress the interviewer by your appearance, actions, and speech. The interviewer does not have to impress you. Your goal is to make that interviewer believe that you are the very best possible person for the position.

How do you go about doing that? The following suggestions can help you have a good interview.

First, be prepared. Bring ALL information you need to fill out a job application, including social security number, birth date, names and addresses of references, work history with dates, etc. It's a good idea to keep this information on an index card in your wallet or billfold so that you have it handy when you are asked to fill out a job application.

You might also want to bring any special documents you'll need, such as licenses, diplomas, or permits. Bring a pen and a list of questions you'd like to have answered. These questions might be about the salary, working conditions, benefits, or hours.

Make sure you know the name and title of the person whom you are supposed to see for the interview.

Get to the interview ON TIME. Make sure you know where you are supposed to go.

Find out as much as you can about the job and the employer. This helps you to ask better questions during the interview and will show the interviewer that you are interested in the job.

LOCK YOUR BEST. It may seem unnecessary to mention, but take a bath or shower, wash your hair, and brush your teeth before the interview. Men should shave and should avoid using strong after-shave lotions. Women should avoid using too much makeup and perfume. Dress neatly and professionally. Don't wear far-out styles or casual clothes. Ripped blue jeans are out! Don't wear a lot of jewelry.

Ripped blue jeans are out! Don't wear a lot of jewelry. Save the dangling earrings for a night on the town. For office jobs, dress the way most office workers do. Men wear clean shirts and slacks and perhaps a jacket and tie. Women wear dresses or skirts and blouses. Watch your hemline! Whatever you wear, make sure it is clean, neat, and suitable for the place in which you are to be interviewed.

Keep a mental list of all your positive points. Be prepared to talk about them; after all, it's your responsibility during an interview to "sell" yourself to the prospective employer. But don't brag. Even if you think you are the best thing since sliced bread, it's rude to show that you think so!

Make sure you are on your best behavior from the moment you step in the door. The receptionist to whom you speak might take part in the interview process. Be friendly, but not too friendly.

Don't smoke or chew gum during the interview. If you've been smoking or eating before the interview, chew a breath mint before you go in.

When you meet the interviewer, smile and be friendly. Stand up straight, with your head up. Women should offer to shake hands first if the interviewer is a man. Men should wait for the interviewer to offer his or her hand. Shake hands firmly, but not too tight.

Speak clearly, using good diction and grammar. Don't use slang. How you speak is critical to your success in an interview for an office job. Speaking well makes a good impression on an interviewer at any time.

Don't fidget or move around the room. Sit when the interviewer asks you to, not before. Sit up straight in the chair--don't slouch.

Don't interrupt the interviewer when he or she is talking. You'll have a chance to talk before the interview is over! Answer questions fully but don't ramble on.

Don't try to take over the interview. Let the interviewer determine how the interview will take place. After all, that is his or her job. S/he will probably ask you if you have any questions, so you can bring up anything that hasn't been covered.

The last impression is as important as the first. Close the interview well by thanking the interviewer for seeing you. Shake hands as you did at the beginning of the interview. If you are interested in the job, write or call the interviewer. Keep the call or letter short and to the

point. Thank the interviewer again for having seen you and say that you are interested in the job. Add anything else that might help you, but again, keep it simple!

JOB KEEPING SKILLS

Your success in your job depends not only on your ability to perform the technical aspects of the job, such as typing, filing, etc., but also on what you might consider the "little" things. These "little" things, or job fundamentals, can help you advance in your job, and the lack of them can hold you back.

What are the fundamentals? Simply put, they are common sense work habits. Employers by and large are very much concerned about whether you come to work on time every day, look reasonably neat, are friendly and polite to co-workers and clients, and keep your working area neat. Assuming that you are doing your job, these fundamentals can certainly tip the balance in your favor when it comes to a promotion or raise.

Yes, these fundamentals are common sense, but a lot of people have forgotten them or never realized their importance. If you dress sloppily, treat clients rudely, take an extra fifteen minutes at lunch every day, you are certainly going to be evaluated poorly by your supervisor. If, on the other hand, you pay particular attention to these details, you will be ahead of the pack.

Despite your level of employment, you can never discard these fundamentals. Just as key athletes drill day in and day out on simple fundamentals to stay sharp, so should you. Whatever else you do builds on the fundamentals, in sports and in the work place.

Knowing and practicing these fundamentals doesn't take an advanced degree or any special skills. As long as you are well-groomed, polite, good-natured, and hardworking, you will be on the plus side when it comes time to be evaluated.

SOME ADDITIONAL RESOURCES.....

The following is a short list of materials that might help you better prepare for government tests. Many of the materials are available through the Curriculum Technology Resource Center at Cedar Lakes. Others can be purchased commercially.

Getting Smarter: The Study Skills Improvement Program, Lawrence J. Greene. David S. Lake Publishers, 1985.

The Grammar Crammer, Kesselman-Turkel, Judi. Contemporary Books, 1982.

How to Complete Job Applications and Resumes, Jungjohann, Kathy. L.C. Publications, 1985.

Improving Your Vocabulary Skills, Crowell, Caleb E. EDI, 1983.

Test Taking Skills Training Manual, Potts, Meta. ABE Academy.

Test Taking Strategies, Kesselman-Turkel, Judi. Contemporary Books, 1981.

Civil Service Office Skills Review, Kilshenstein, Dolores and Grant-Goddard, Bettye. South-Western, 1985.

Arco Publishing has a complete catalog of Civil Service Career and Exam Preparation Books. It can be obtained by writing to:

Arco Publishing Company, Inc.
219 Park Avenue, South
New York, NY 10003

COMPLETING JOB APPLICATIONS

Now that you've checked out the job you want and studied for the employment test, you are probably ready to fill out an application. A job application is usually the first look an employer has of you, your qualifications, and your experience. How well you complete a job application often means the difference between getting the job or not.

All right, so you know how important it is to do it right. But then, just as you're ready to start completing the application, your mind goes blank. You have no idea where or when you went to school or worked. What's worse, you can't take the application with you. If this has ever happened to you, don't give up. It's common to forget important names, addresses, and dates, but it is NOT a good idea to guess or leave blanks!

So. . . what do you do to have the very best application possible? A good first step is to take the time to look at yourself -- at your personal history, your work experience, and your education and training.

Personal History

Your personal history is a record of you and a little bit about your work preferences. Some job applications ask for information about whether or not you've had trouble with the law. Certain government job applications ask very specific and detailed information about your personal life. It is essential that you answer **COMPLETELY** and **HONESTLY**. Look over the following worksheet and fill it out for practice.

Personal History Worksheet

Name _____
Last First MI

Address _____

Phone Number (____) _____

Social Security Number _____ - _____ - _____

Do you have a driver's license? ____yes ____no

Driver's License Number _____

Are you a US citizen? ____yes ____no

If no, date of entry _____

Are there any days of the week you can't work?

Reason? _____

Do you want full-time____ part-time____ temporary work____

Shifts you are willing to work? ____day ____swing ____midnight

Have you ever been convicted of violating any law (except traffic violations)? ____yes ____no If yes, summarize the details.

Work History

It is really important for you to give a complete and absolutely accurate listing of your work experience. Usually, you will be asked to list the dates, employer's name and address, salary, job title or description, and reason for leaving.

First, make sure you have the correct addresses and names of employers. Double check the dates of employment also. Don't leave gaps. An employer will want to know why you worked from November 1977 until March 1980, but didn't work again until May 1981, for example. If you do have a gap in your employment record, be prepared to explain it in an interview. For instance, if you left work to rear children or go to school, make sure the employer knows that!

You will probably be asked to list jobs from most recent to least recent. Keep dates in order. And most importantly, NEVER lie about why you left a job. If you got fired, say so. Now, you can say that you got fired without actually using the word fired. It is perfectly all right to say you had a personality conflict with the employer. Then in the interview, you can elaborate on it if needed WITHOUT being negative and bitter toward the former employer. The key point here is to be honest, complete, and accurate in giving your work history.

Use the following worksheet as practice to help you get your work history in order.

Work History Worksheet

From Mo/Yr	To Mo/Yr	Employer Address/Phone	Salary	Job Title
Specific reason for leaving				
From Mo/Yr	To Mo/Yr	Employer Address/Phone	Salary	Job Title
Specific reason for leaving				
From Mo/Yr	To Mo/Yr	Employer Address/Phone	Salary	Job Title
Specific reason for leaving				
From Mo/Yr	To Mo/Yr	Employer Address/Phone	Salary	Job Title
Specific reason for leaving				
From Mo/Yr	To Mo/Yr	Employer Address/Phone	Salary	Job Title
Specific reason for leaving				
From Mo/Yr	To Mo/Yr	Employer Address/Phone	Salary	Job Title
Specific reason for leaving				
From Mo/Yr	To Mo/Yr	Employer Address/Phone	Salary	Job Title
Specific reason for leaving				

Education

Most applications ask for a listing of your education. Usually you will start with your high school and then fill out information about any other education you may have had. If you did not finish high school but did get a GED, then you should answer that you did not graduate but under the heading Degree/Type of Diploma, you may list GED and the year in which you earned it.

Sometimes, applications will ask for a major course. In high school, that would be General or College Preparatory. If you've taken any college classes, then your major would be the subject area in which you had the most classes. If you attended a technical or trade school, your major course would be the discipline or skill area in which you studied.

Use the following worksheet to list your education.

Education Worksheet

List all schools attended	Name/Address of school	From Mo/Yr	To Mo/Yr	Graduated
---------------------------	------------------------	------------	----------	-----------

High School				

Degree/Type of Diploma_____

Major Course_____

College or University				

Degree/Type of Diploma_____

Major Course_____

College or University				

Degree/Type of Diploma_____

Major Course_____

Graduate School				

Degree/Type of Diploma_____

Major Course_____

Business/Technical School				

Degree/Type of Diploma_____

Major Course_____

If you attended college but did not graduate, how many credit hours needed for degree? Associate____ Bachelor____

List any scholarships, academic honors, awards, or special achievements_____

References

A reference is a person, not a relative, who knows something about you, your work habits and ethics, your skills, and your personality. Of course, you want to use people who will be positive about you! Always ask permission before using someone as a reference. No one likes surprises. It's a good idea to compile a list of references to have handy when filling out applications. Use the following worksheet as a guide.

Reference Worksheet

Name_____

Home Address_____

Business Address_____

Home Phone_____Work Phone_____

Relationship_____

How long have you known this person?_____

Name_____

Home Address_____

Business Address_____

Home Phone_____Work Phone_____

Relationship_____

How long have you known this person?_____

Name_____

Home Address_____

Business Address_____

Home Phone_____Work Phone_____

Relationship_____

How long have you known this person?_____

Completing Job Applications . . . Some Things to Remember

- * Always PRINT or TYPE your application.
- * Make sure that what you write can be easily read.
- * Be honest.
- * Fill out the application completely and accurately.
- * Keep information in chronological order.
- * Be neat. A messy application gives an employer a message you may not intend!
- * Don't get discouraged. Not every application will result in an interview, but keep trying!

A Final Note

Now that you've gotten all your information together, keep the worksheets as references. Use them when you are filling out applications. As a final practice, complete the job application which appears on the next two pages. Most of the information asked for on this application will be on your worksheets. Once you've completed it, you are now well-prepared to fill out job applications in the real world. Good luck!

IMPORTANT: Read Terms of Employment carefully. Print or type answers to every question. All information on this application will be treated confidentially. FEDERAL AND STATE LAWS PROHIBIT DISCRIMINATION BECAUSE OF RACE, COLOR, RELIGION, NATIONAL ORIGIN, AGE OR SEX.

PERSONAL DATA

Last Name		First Name		Middle Name		Date	
Present Address:	Number and Street	City	State	Zip Code	Telephone:		
					Area Code		
Permanent Address:	Number and Street	City	State	Zip Code	Telephone:		
					Area Code		
IN CASE OF EMERGENCY NOTIFY: Name _____ Number and Street _____ City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____							
*Date of Birth	Social Security Number			Are you a citizen of the U.S.A.?		If no, date of entry	
				☐ Yes ☐ No		Alien Registration No. _____	
HAVE YOU EVER BEEN CONVICTED OF VIOLATING ANY LAW (EXCEPT TRAFFIC VIOLATION)? ☐ Yes ☐ No. If yes, attach summary of details. Disclosure of a criminal record does not automatically disqualify you from employment consideration. Your case will be judged on its own merits.						Do you have a drivers license? ☐ Yes ☐ No	
						Type	Expires
Height	Weight	Time lost during past year due to accident or illness:				Nature of accident or illness:	
		Total days _____ No. of occurrences _____					
Do you have any physical, mental, or medical impairments which would interfere with your ability to perform the job for which you have applied? ☐ Yes ☐ No If any, explain: _____							

EDUCATION

List all schools attended	Name and address of school	* From Mo/Yr	* To Mo/Yr	Graduated (Yes or No)	Degree/Type of Diploma	Major Course
High School	_____					
College or University	_____					
College or University	_____					
Graduate School	_____					
Business or Technical	_____					

If you attended college but did not graduate, how many credit hours needed for degree? Associate _____ Bachelor _____

List any scholarships, academic honors, awards or special achievements: _____

List languages which you speak proficiently: _____
 read proficiently: _____

WORK INTEREST

Position applied for:	Location preferred:	Minimum salary:	Type of Employment desired: ☐ Full Time ☐ Part Time ☐ Temporary	Earliest availability date:
Have you ever filed an application with this company before? ☐ Yes ☐ No When? _____ Where? _____				
Have you ever been interviewed by this company? ☐ Yes ☐ No When? _____ Where? _____				
Are you willing to work rotating shifts including nights and weekends? _____ Transfer to another city? _____ State? _____ Country? _____				
Briefly state reasons for interest in employment with this company: _____ _____ _____				
List acquaintances employed by this company. (Note: Company policy prohibits the employment of relatives, as defined in paragraph 10 of the Terms of Employment on back of application.)				

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

List all previous work experience including military service record and periods of unemployment. *Begin with present position and work back to your first position.* Attach resume, if necessary. If there were periods of more than one month where you were self-employed or unemployed, list name and address of person(s) who can verify your activities during this period(s).

From Mo/Yr	To Mo/Yr	Employer Address/Telephone Number	Salary	Job Title and Description of Work Performed	Specific reason for leaving

SPECIAL SKILLS

All applicants who have experience in the following skills should complete this section.

OFFICE: Adding Machine _____ Keypunch _____ Calculator _____ Teletype _____			
Typing _____ W.P.M. Shorthand _____ W.P.M. Speedwriting _____ W.P.M. _____			
D.P. EXPERIENCE: Hardware Equipmt. _____ Software Equipmt. _____ Language(s) _____			
MECHANIC Type of Experience	Months	Type of equipment	Licenses held and number
Line Maintenance			A
Aircraft Overhaul			P
Engine Overhaul			A&P
Electronics			
Accessories			FCC Radio
Machine Shop			Other
Automotive			
Other:			
Can you read and work with Blueprints? _____ Do you own a complete set of tools? _____ Value \$ _____			
AVIONICS FCC License: Class _____ Type _____ Number _____			
	Training	Experience	Type of work and equipment
Radio Technician			
Radar and Other			

MILITARY SERVICE

* Branch	* Grade or Rank	* Nature of duty or training	Induction date	Separation date
* Present Selective Service Classification:		* Type of Discharge or Separation:	* If present Selective Service Classification is 1Y or 4F, please state the reason:	